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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#) [AU](#) [EU](#) [OSCE](#)  
SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: KOSOVO RECOGNITION, STEERING GROUP, OSCE  
DISCUSSION

REF: (A) STATE 13716 (B) STATE 12026 (C) STATE 14284

Classified By: Econ/Pol Couns Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d)

[¶1.](#) (U) Econ/Pol Couns met 2/12 with MFA Acting Southeast Europe Department Director Thomas Schnoell to review Austrian plans for recognition of Kosovo membership in the Kosovo ISG, and related issues.

#### Austrian Recognition

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[¶2.](#) (C) Schnoell reported that recognition involved a three-step process that begins with a decision in the cabinet. The cabinet meets only on Wednesdays and Schnoell said no special session of the cabinet is foreseen to deal with recognition. In addition, in the coming week, Foreign Minister Plassnik will be unavailable because of the EU GAERC on Monday. Once the cabinet decision is taken, a message will be sent to President Fischer requesting that he authorize the Foreign Minister to recognize Kosovo. Fischer would sign that message and transmit it to the Foreign Minister, whereupon she would issue a statement of recognition. Schnoell said that the process would be completed "quickly," and, if independence were declared this coming weekend, formal recognition would happen by February [¶22.](#) He added that there would be no doubt possible, even before a cabinet decision, about what Austria's position was.

#### International Steering Group (ISG)

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[¶3.](#) (C) Schnoell was aware of the intention to nominate Austria as a member of the ISG and said that Austria would accept the invitation and attendant responsibilities. He welcomed the additional information on the group's make-up, responsibilities, and initial tasks.

#### OSCE/Berlin Mechanism

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[¶4.](#) (C) Schnoell reported that the Slovenian Presidency was in the process of coordinating a common position that would reject Serbian invocation of the Berlin Mechanism. He was confident that the member states would agree on this and that none would support invocation of the Mechanism. He noted that, with a united EU front, the Serbs would not be able to assemble the needed twelve countries in support of their request. However, he noted that Serbia would be within its rights to call a special session of the OSCE Permanent Council which, he thought, would probably happen.

#### EU Situation

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[¶5.](#) (C) The Spanish position, Schnoell said, had hardened over the last week, which would offer cover for smaller member states with doubts about an active EU policy on Kosovo. At

the Feb. 18 GAERC, Schnoell foresees a difficult effort to agree on language that will allow the EU to move forward on projects such as the ESDP mission, while at the same time not appearing to prejudge the recognition decision for all member states. In addition to Spain, Schnoell identified Cyprus and Romania as of particular concern.

Kilner